THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

MAGAZINE.

HARK, the voice of Jesus, crying,
"Who will go and work to-day?
Fields are white, and harvests waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?"
Loud and long the Master calleth;
Rich reward He offers free;
Who will answer, gladly saying,—
"Here am I, send me, send me"?

If you cannot cross the ocean,
And the heathen lands explore,
You can find the heathen nearer,
You can help them at your door.
If you cannot give your thousands,
You can give the widow's mite;
And the least you give for Jesus,
Will be precious in His sight.

If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say He died for all.
If you cannot rouse the wicked
With the Judgment's dread alarms,
You can lead the little children
To the Saviour's waiting arms.

Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do,"
While the souls of men are dying,
And the Master calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly;
Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
"Here am I, send me, send me!"

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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

TO OUR READERS.

In retracing the events of the past year we have, as on every previous review of our labours, to express profound gratitude to our gracious Father for the spiritual and social harvest reaped in Ragged Schools.

It is true that the aggregate of scholars registered in Day Schools has much diminished ; but this has arisen solely from the number of Schools transferred to the London School Board. Yet the numbers attached to most branches of our work not only show no diminution, but in many cases a large increase. Thus, for example, a recent operation — the Children's Church — made a noticeable advance last year. At this moment, 3,414 little worshippers are collected mostly on the Lord's Day in forty-three children's churches. By these simple services, children are familiarised with all the forms of public worship, and in numerous cases they have been led to give their hearts to Jesus in their tenderest years.

If any persons imagine that Ragged Schools have completed their mission, it shows how little they know of the great object of the pioneers in this great social and religious crusade. Needful as secular instruction was found to be, yet the primary aim of Ragged Schools was to socialise and to save neglected or destitute children. This led gradually from the Sunday School to the Penny Bank and Clothing Club, and from the Mothers' Meetings to the Ragged Church. At present there are no less than 1,150 distinct operations carried on in the 180 institutions affiliated to the Ragged School Union, 750 of which are purely of a social or of a religious character. When it is indicated that about 240 solely concern adults, it will be seen that, whilst children are still the chief objects of our mission, their parents are not overlooked.

As the only organ of Ragged Schools at home or abroad, we have never restricted our sketches to the great metropolis, nor have we overlooked any kindred movement for the welfare of the masses. For every plan—be it drinking fountain or medical mission—which seeks to promote the interests of our poor brethren has had our warmest advocacy. This is the course which we propose to ourselves in the future ; for it does not need prophetic insight to perceive that, if Ragged Schools are still to keep in the front, they must so broaden out as to embrace every plan for the social and religious reclamation of the poor.

That the need for the social and religious agencies of Ragged Schools has ceased, or can cease, we do not believe. A visit to any of our byeways—those "slums" which offer a bitter satire on the boasted civilisation of the nineteenth century—will show that vice is as rampant, and poverty is as intense as when our Schools sprang into vigorous action. Nothing, indeed, but the unadulterated Gospel can meet evils which seem ready to crush out the national life. But, with God's panacea for every social and moral evil, we think that we should be guilty of a great social crime did we not contend to our utmost with these giant sins and equally giant miseries. Nor do we doubt our final victory, for we believe that the day is not far distant when the prophecy uttered nigh three thousand years ago will be literally fulfilled : "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing on his wings,"—and that over the "wide, wide world !"

THE EDITOR.

1, *Exeter Hall, December* 1872.

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